



## United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
BOX 25046 MS 801A  
Denver Federal Center  
Denver, Colorado 80225

In Reply Refer To:  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Attention: Mr. Nour Suleiman  
Box 25046, MS 406  
Denver Federal Center  
Denver, Colorado 80225

March 8, 2019

Mr. Austin R Evers  
American Oversight  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest, Suite B255  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
*Transmitted by electronic mail: [foia@americanoversight.org](mailto:foia@americanoversight.org)*

Re: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Tracking #  
USGS-2019-00018 – Response

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is our response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated October 31, 2018, in which you requested copies of the following records:

- 1) All email communications and associated attachments sent or received by any political appointee, including emails on which any custodian is copied (cc'd) or blind copied (bcc'd). Responsive records are limited to those including any of the following terms:
  - IPCC
  - “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”
  - “United Nations report”
  - UN
  - “1.5 C”
  - “1.5 degrees”
  - “global warming”
  - “climate change”

- 2) Records describing the processing of this request, including records sufficient to identify search terms used and locations and custodians searched, and any tracking sheets used to track the processing of this request. FOIA questionnaires or certifications completed by individual custodians or components to determine whether they possess responsive materials or to describe how they conducted searches, you also request any such records prepared in connection with the processing of this request.

We have enclosed two portable document format (PDF) records, consisting of 8 pages, and which is being released to you in its entirety.

The document titled "2019-00018 - Fwd\_ Action-due ASAP\_ Secretary requests info", consisting of 3 pages, is responsive to the first section of your request.

The document titled "2019-0018 - FOIA Notification", consisting of 5 pages, highlights the processing of your request. The U.S. Geological Survey does not possess FOIA questionnaires, tracking sheets, or certifications to determine if custodians possess responsive records. We do not possess records directly responsive to the second section of your request. Therefore, I am responsible for this denial.

On November 1, 2018, we granted your request for a fee waiver. As such, you are not being charged for the processing of your request.

You may appeal this response to the Department's FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal **no later than 90 workdays** from the date of this letter. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 P.M. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

**Your appeal must be made in writing.** You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe the USGS's response is in error. You must also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and USGS concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and USGS's response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and USGS will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

*DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information*

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
Attention: FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
MS-6556 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Telephone: (202) 208-5339  
Fax: (202) 208-6677  
Email: [FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov](mailto:FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov)

For more information on FOIA Administrative Appeals, you may review Subpart H of the Department's FOIA regulations, [43 C.F.R. Part 2, Sub-part H](#).

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS  
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001  
Telephone: (202) 741-5770  
Fax: (202) 741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448  
E-mail: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Web: <https://ogis.archives.gov>

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer.

You also may seek dispute resolution services from our FOIA Public Liaison, Mr. Brian May, USGS Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer, at the following address:

U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of the Interior  
5522 Research Park Drive  
Baltimore, Maryland 21228  
Telephone: (443) 498-5521  
Fax: (443) 498-5510  
Email: [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov)

This completes our response to your request. If you have any questions about our response, you may contact me by phone at (303) 236-2733, by email at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov), or by mail at Denver Federal Center, Box 25046, Mail Stop 801A; Denver, CO 80225.

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Geological Survey.

Sincerely,

**Nour  
Suleiman**

Nour Suleiman  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Government Information Specialist

Digitally signed by  
Nour Suleiman  
Date: 2019.03.08  
14:00:40 -07'00'

Enclosures (2 PDFs, 8 pages):

2019-00018 - Fwd\_ Action-due ASAP\_

Secretary requests info. (3 pages)

2019-00018 – FOIA Notification (5 pages)

**From:** [nsuleiman@usgs.gov](mailto:nsuleiman@usgs.gov) on behalf of [Freedom of Information Act, GS-D-EI](#)  
**To:** [Clark, Melanie](#)  
**Cc:** [GS-D-EI Freedom of Information Act](#)  
**Subject:** FOIA: USGS-2019-00018 - Notification of new FOIA request; Request to search for records  
**Date:** Thursday, November 1, 2018 9:40:22 AM  
**Attachments:** [2019-00018 - FOIA Request.pdf](#)

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Good Morning Melanie:

The FOIA Program has received a request from Mr. Austin Evers of American Oversight, Washington D.C., seeking the following records/information from September 15, 2018, through October 31, 2018, regarding Director Reilly:

1. All email communications and associated attachments sent or received by any political appointee, including emails on which any custodian is copied (cc'd) or blind copied (bcc'd). Responsive records are limited to those including any of the following terms:

- IPCC
- "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change"
- "United Nations report"
- UN
- "1.5 C"
- "1.5 degrees"
- "global warming"
- "climate change"

2. Records describing the processing of this request, including records sufficient to identify search terms used and locations and custodians searched, and any tracking sheets used to track the processing of this request. FOIA questionnaires or certifications completed by individual custodians or components to determine whether they possess responsive materials or to describe how they conducted searches, he has also requested any such records prepared in connection with the processing of this request.

**Note: A copy of the request is attached for your convenience.**

The requester requested a fee waiver, and we granted his request.

[DOI FOIA Rates](#) for Search and Review Fees:

GS-07 and below: \$6 per 15 minutes, \$24 per hour  
GS-08 through GS-12: \$10.75 per 15 minutes, \$43.00 per hour  
GS-13 and above: \$15.50 per 15 minutes, \$62.00 per hour

You may find the DOI's FOIA Search and Review Fees here:

<https://www.doi.gov/foia/fees-waivers>

**Deadline:**

- Please conduct your search by **November 30, 2018**. If you believe USGS is not in possession of the records requested, please email me at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov).

**NOTE: If you are aware of another Mission Area/Regional Director Office/Program Office involvement, please let us know, and we will coordinate with them.**

Before you begin searching for records, please carefully follow the instructions in this notification memo and respond accordingly. For additional information about the FOIA, please view our [FOIA intranet page](#). Additionally, we suggest that you review the [FAQs](#) that may answer some of your preliminary questions or address some of your concerns.

### **Do we need to Clarify / Narrow the Scope of the Request?**

Is the request unclear and/or too broad in scope? If so, please contact us immediately at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov) and we will contact the requester after our discussion.

### **Time Spent and FOIA Processing Fees:**

Please keep track of the time you spend searching for and reviewing any responsive records. Even if we do not charge FOIA processing fees, the Department has instructed all FOIA Offices to enter their search and review times into the Department's Electronic FOIA Tracking System (EFTS). Please provide the grade(s) of the searchers and the amount of time spent by each individual who conducted a search for records.

For example:

- [X] Hours of Search Time - [GS-grade/step]

### **Searching for Responsive Records:**

- Please search your paper records, local drives on your computer, network drives, intranet, and your emails to determine whether or not you have records responsive to this request. Keep track of the time you spend searching for records. If you have any questions about what you think may or may not be responsive to the request, about the scope of this request, about the time frame of the request, please contact me at (303) 236-2733, before you begin searching for records. **This will help you determine what is in fact responsive to the request, ultimately saving you time and effort.**
- Under the Federal Records Act, government employees are prohibited from using non-official email accounts for official business unless they either carbon copy the messages sent via non-official email accounts to their official email account or forward such messages to their official email account within 20 days. If you have responsive records located on a non-official email account that have not already been carbon copied or forwarded to your official email account, you must 1) forward them to your official email account if you are

within the 20-day window and provide them to the FOIA Office as part of your search response or 2) provide them to the FOIA Office from your non-official email account as part of your search response.

- If you locate responsive records, please save them to your local drive on your computer. I recommend creating a folder on your C: drive, labeled the corresponding FOIA number (e.g. 2019-00018).
- If you locate a large volume of records (500+ records), please contact us before proceeding. We may need to hold a teleconference with the requester and ask them to narrow/cull the scope of their request.
- If you do not locate responsive records, please email us at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov) and state that you were unable to locate responsive records.

### **Collecting Responsive Emails:**

- If you find emails that are responsive and those emails include attachments, please label copies of your emails and the attachment(s) with the corresponding FOIA numbers (e.g. 2019-00018). If you aren't sure what keywords to use when searching in your inbox, please contact us at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov).

### **USGS Responsive Records:**

#### *Multipart Request?*

- If you locate records responsive to various parts of the request, please provide the records to the FOIA Program categorized or organized by the corresponding part of the request. Please do not provide the FOIA Program with boxes of unorganized paper or folders of electronic records without an explanation of which parts of the request the records respond to.

#### *Sensitive Records?*

- If you locate records, please notify the FOIA Program if you foresee a contentious/sensitive issue regarding the records that may be responsive to this request (e.g. Manuscript not approved for release, partnered with another federal agency about a sensitive subject, matter currently in litigation, pending Congressional hearings).

#### *USGS Involvement in a Task Force or Collaborative Study/Project?*

Please mark all applicable items. Comments can be provided on a separate page if needed.

- Was USGS involved in a task force? If so, who was the “lead” agency?
-

- Was USGS involved in a collaborative study/project? If so, who were the other participants? \_\_\_\_\_
- Did USGS act as a consultant? If so, did a state entity or other non-federal entity have the lead? \_\_\_\_\_
- Did a state or non-federal entity provide USGS with information, data, records that may be responsive to this request? If so, please segregate that information and notify the FOIA Program of who provided that information to USGS and if the providing party restricted what USGS could do with the information.
- If we collaborated with a state entity, has that state received a request for information under that state's Freedom of Information law?

### **Records Originating in another Department, Agency, Bureau:**

- If you locate records that originated from another bureau or federal agency or department, please create a folder and label it with the name of the appropriate bureau, agency, or department.
- If necessary, the FOIA Office will coordinate either a consultation with the owning bureau, agency, or department; or, the FOIA Office will refer those records to the owning bureau, agency, or department.
- If USGS has already posted all or some of the requested information on our public facing internet site, please provide us with hyperlinks to the webpage(s).

### **Producing Records to the FOIA Office:**

- Once you complete your search and if you identify any records, please contact us and we can work with you to determine the easiest way to transmit the responsive records to the FOIA Office. If possible, please transmit the records in an electronic medium, either through a Google Drive, the [FOIA DMU](#) process built into BisonConnect, on a CD, on a DVD, or on a USB drive.
- If you use the FOIA DMU process, please ensure that you uncheck the "Print Footer" boxes in your BisonConnect [Print Options](#) screen, before running the FOIA DMU process.
- If you are unsure whether or not a record is responsive, please include it with the responsive records and in a subfolder named "Potentially Responsive," or something to that effect.

### **FOIA Officer Makes Final Release Determinations:**



- Please do not make a release determination on your own; it's the FOIA Office's responsibility to answer the request on behalf of the bureau and the Office of the Solicitor reviews all records that we deem releasable in part or to be withheld in full. Your subject matter expertise and input is extremely valuable to us and we cannot properly respond to this request without your assistance. If necessary, we will contact you as we process this request.

Sincerely,

//SIGNED//

Nour Suleiman  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of the Interior  
Denver Federal Center  
Box 25046  
Mail Stop 801A  
Denver, CO 80225  
(303) 236-2733 (office)  
(303) 236-1451 (fax)  
[foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov)

**From:** [Clark, Melanie](#)  
**To:** [GS-GIO Freedom of Information Act](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Action-due ASAP: Secretary requests information re SLR in the Pacific  
**Date:** Friday, November 30, 2018 7:26:22 AM

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This is what Margo gave me in response to FOIA 2019-00018.

Thanks-  
Melanie

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Melanie A. Clark  
Program Specialist  
Immediate Office of the Director  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Tel: 703/648-4322; Fax: 4454

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Reilly, James** <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>  
Date: Fri, Nov 30, 2018 at 7:20 AM  
Subject: Fwd: Action-due ASAP: Secretary requests information re SLR in the Pacific  
To: Melanie Clark <[melanie\\_clark@usgs.gov](mailto:melanie_clark@usgs.gov)>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Judy Nowakowski** <[jnowakowski@usgs.gov](mailto:jnowakowski@usgs.gov)>  
Date: Thu, Oct 25, 2018 at 8:12 PM  
Subject: Action-due ASAP: Secretary requests information re SLR in the Pacific  
To: Curt Storlazzi <[cstorlazzi@usgs.gov](mailto:cstorlazzi@usgs.gov)>, Patrick Barnard <[pbarnard@usgs.gov](mailto:pbarnard@usgs.gov)>  
Cc: Guy Gelfenbaum <[ggelfenbaum@usgs.gov](mailto:ggelfenbaum@usgs.gov)>, Nadine Golden <[ngolden@usgs.gov](mailto:ngolden@usgs.gov)>, David Applegate <[applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)>, John Haines <[jhaines@usgs.gov](mailto:jhaines@usgs.gov)>, Douglas Beard <[dbeard@usgs.gov](mailto:dbeard@usgs.gov)>, James Reilly <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>, William Werkheiser <[whwerkhe@usgs.gov](mailto:whwerkhe@usgs.gov)>, Joanne Taylor <[jctaylor@usgs.gov](mailto:jctaylor@usgs.gov)>

Hi Curt and Patrick,

Would you mind pulling together a response to this? It's for the Secretary so we need a high-level response as soon as possible, how quickly can you turn it around? When we submit it, we'll offer to follow up with more detail and/or a briefing if desired.

Please let me know if you have questions.

Thanks!

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** John Haines <[jhaines@usgs.gov](mailto:jhaines@usgs.gov)>  
**Date:** October 25, 2018 at 7:48:44 PM EDT  
**To:** Judy Nowakowski <[jnowakowski@usgs.gov](mailto:jnowakowski@usgs.gov)>, David Applegate <[applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)>, Douglas Beard <[dbeard@usgs.gov](mailto:dbeard@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** James Reilly <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>, William Werkheiser <[whwerkhe@usgs.gov](mailto:whwerkhe@usgs.gov)>, Joanne Taylor <[jctaylor@usgs.gov](mailto:jctaylor@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Action-due ASAP: Request for Information following today's Monthly W&S meeting with the Secretary

Judy -

I'd advise sending request to Curt Storlazzi and Patrick Barnard, both in Santa Cruz CMG science center, cc'ing their center director (Guy Gelfenbaum) and his associate CD (Nadine Golden), as I believe Guy may be on international travel.

John

John W. Haines, Ph.D.  
Program Coordinator  
USGS, Coastal and Marine Geology Program

(703) 648-6422 work  
(571) 265-5216 cell  
[jhaines@usgs.gov](mailto:jhaines@usgs.gov)

Sent from my phone

----- Original message -----

From: Judy Nowakowski <[jnowakowski@usgs.gov](mailto:jnowakowski@usgs.gov)>  
Date: 10/25/18 6:29 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: David Applegate <[applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)>, Douglas Beard <[dbeard@usgs.gov](mailto:dbeard@usgs.gov)>, John Haines <[jhaines@usgs.gov](mailto:jhaines@usgs.gov)>  
Cc: James Reilly <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>, William Werkheiser <[whwerkhe@usgs.gov](mailto:whwerkhe@usgs.gov)>, Joanne Taylor <[jctaylor@usgs.gov](mailto:jctaylor@usgs.gov)>  
Subject: Action-due ASAP: Request for Information following today's Monthly W&S meeting with the Secretary

Hi all, would Curt Storlazzi be in the best position to prepare a draft response, with input from LR? It's for the Secretary so we need it ASAP. Thanks!

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Rae, Kerry" <[kerry\\_rae@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kerry_rae@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Date:** October 25, 2018 at 5:54:50 PM EDT  
**To:** James Reilly <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Tim Petty <[timothy\\_petty@ios.doi.gov](mailto:timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov)>, William Lukas  
<[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>, Judy Nowakowski <[jnowakowski@usgs.gov](mailto:jnowakowski@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject: Request for Information following today's Monthly  
W&S meeting**

Hi - During this afternoon's monthly meeting, there was discussion about a recent NOAA announcement regarding sea level rise and the impacts on Pacific islands.

As USGS is studying sea level rise, we are requesting information related to the trends and charts recording the Pacific ocean levels over the last 50 years or so, and the current USGS projections. If there are projections relative to Pacific islands, please include that information as well.

Thanks, Kerry

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**Kerry Rae**

Chief of Staff for Water & Science  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Phone: 202-513-0535  
Mobile: 202-494-4101  
Email: [Kerry\\_Rae@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kerry_Rae@ios.doi.gov)

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Dr. Jim Reilly  
Director  
USGS  
Office: 703.648.7411  
Cell: 571.443.0055  
[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)